

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 50

48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2007

INTRODUCED BY

Ben Lujan

A JOINT MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING SOSTENGA!, THE CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD,  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT AT NORTHERN NEW MEXICO COLLEGE, AS  
A STATE RESOURCE FOR PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY  
INVOLVEMENT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, FOOD SECURITY AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

WHEREAS, New Mexico is ranked first in the nation in food  
insecurity and third in hunger; and

WHEREAS, low-income New Mexico families spend as much as  
twenty-six percent of their annual income on food, a proportion  
that is double that of the national average; and

WHEREAS, evidence suggests that many New Mexicans,  
especially those living in rural areas, do not have adequate  
access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate foods  
because they lack access to grocery stores and transportation;

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1 and

2 WHEREAS, health problems caused by poor nutrition,  
3 including obesity and diabetes, cost New Mexico three hundred  
4 twenty-four million dollars (\$324,000,000) annually; and

5 WHEREAS, those health problems can be remedied with  
6 improved nutrition through adequate access to healthy,  
7 affordable and culturally appropriate foods; and

8 WHEREAS, farm and ranch land has been supplanted by real  
9 estate development, particularly in northern New Mexico; and

10 WHEREAS, agricultural producers are increasingly searching  
11 for additional economic development activities, such as office  
12 and technical work, to augment a chosen agrarian lifestyle; and

13 WHEREAS, sustenance farming has been the life blood of  
14 northern New Mexico; and

15 WHEREAS, northern New Mexico college strives to expand the  
16 college's capacity to address these issues through Sostenga!,  
17 the center for sustainable food, agriculture and environment  
18 and its commercial kitchen to promote healthy eating and  
19 lifestyles, work force development, value-added food  
20 production, entrepreneurship and management; and

21 WHEREAS, northern New Mexico college's Sostenga! center  
22 seeks to develop educational programs, community resources and  
23 a food cooperative to provide healthy local produce, support  
24 local farmers and market value-added local products;

25 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE

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1 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that Sostenga!, the center for sustainable  
2 food, agriculture and environment at northern New Mexico  
3 college, is hereby recognized as a state resource for  
4 participatory research and community involvement for  
5 environmental health, food security and economic development in  
6 northern New Mexico, and that this resource enhances the  
7 state's capability to address the public health problems of  
8 diabetes, obesity and rural economic and community development;  
9 and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of the governor be  
11 requested to provide information to the department of health  
12 and the economic development department that Sostenga!, the  
13 center for sustainable food, agriculture and environment at  
14 northern New Mexico college, is a resource for participatory  
15 research, community involvement, environmental health, food  
16 security and economic development; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of the governor be  
18 requested to direct the economic development department to  
19 provide support in the form of business development assistance  
20 and assistance in the creation of a food cooperative to sell  
21 local produce and value-added products in Rio Arriba county,  
22 and that the economic development department report to the  
23 appropriate legislative interim committee regarding the level  
24 of support to Sostenga! and the related food cooperative  
25 initiatives by November 2007; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of the governor and  
2 any appropriate state agencies include representatives of  
3 Sostenga! in health, economic development and food security  
4 initiatives, particularly where the assets of northern New  
5 Mexico may be utilized or its needs may be addressed; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
7 transmitted to the governor, the secretary of economic  
8 development, the director of the New Mexico department of  
9 agriculture and the president of northern New Mexico college.

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